

Three regional growth clusters proposed on EDFC in U.P.

World Bank to prepare structure plans for three regions

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World Bank has agreed to prepare Structure Plans for three regional growth clusters proposed on the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) alignment passing through Uttar Pradesh. Proposed regions are *Auraiya-Kannauj-Kanpur* including Kanpur Dehat, *Allahabad-Varanasi* including Kaushambi and Sant Ravidas Nagar and *Agra-Aligarh* including Mathura, Hathras and Firozabad.

The decision was taken after a detailed presentation on draft report on 'Strategic Regional Development Options for Uttar Pradesh' was made by World Bank Lead Urban Specialist, Barjor Mehta before Principal Secretary, Infrastructure & Industrial Development Department (IIDD), Dr Surya Pratap Singh here today. Other decisions included finalising the *Terms of Reference* within a month for preparation of Structure Plans, firming up of the analytical report based on deeper regional analysis and nomination of **Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation (UPSIDC)** as the **nodal agency** to work with World Bank on this project.

Agreeing to the regional growth clusters approach of the World Bank, Principal Secretary, IIDD, Dr Surya Pratap Singh said, *"Keeping in view that Uttar Pradesh is the biggest beneficiary of EDFC, preparation of structure plans and development of infrastructure in the EDFC influence area in a systemic way is imperative to prevent unorganised growth and future hassles."* Dr Singh added that *U.P. was fortunate to be full of potential for new investment in industries and manufacturing as the State possessed huge consumer base, raw material, natural resources and virgin tracts of land fit for the purpose.*

Informing that the construction of EDFC is being financed by the World Bank, Lead Urban Specialist, Barjor Mehta said, *"We have identified these locations because it would be more cost-effective if already growing regions are developed based on Growth Center Attractive Index including various parameters, such as- market accessibility, density of economic activity, per capita industrial investment, education level and growth rate of trade centres."* Explaining the reason for proposing 'clusters' instead of 'nodes', Mehta said that clusters allow to expand the development influence area more compared to nodes.

Later, the delegation met Infrastructure & Industrial Development Commissioner, Alok Ranjan, who said, *"We are pursuing EDFC project proactively as it is going to be a game-changer for industrial development in U.P."*

A nine member World Bank team is on the tour of Uttar Pradesh including Lucknow, Kanpur, Auraiya, etc. as part of their exercise to prepare an **Option Paper** for EDFC. Government of India has authorised World Bank, Lead Urban Specialist Barjor Mehta for this purpose. Apart from Barjor Mehta, the **World Bank team included** Consulting Economist & Planner - *Professor David Dowall*; Senior Country Economist, World Bank - *Denis Medvedev*; Lead Economist in the South Asia Urban Development Unit of the World Bank - *Peter Ellis*; Lead Urban Economist - *Songsu Choi*; Urban Specialist - *Jon Kher Kaw*; Sangyun Cheon, Vibhu Jain and Parul Agawala.

It is pertinent here to mention that the World Bank team had visited U.P. in July this year and agreed to prepare plans for two regions, viz. Auraiya and Allahabad. However, now instead of two the World Bank will prepare structure plans for three regions.

It may be noted that proposed alignment of **1840 Km long EDFC**, starting from Punjab, includes mainly Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. **Uttar Pradesh is the biggest beneficiary of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor project with the share of nearly 57 percent measuring 1049 Kms dissecting the state. State government has already submitted the concept paper on developing Amritsar-Delhi-Kolkata Industrial Corridor to be developed** on the lines of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor on Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.